

Pacific Cargoes Inc.

OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

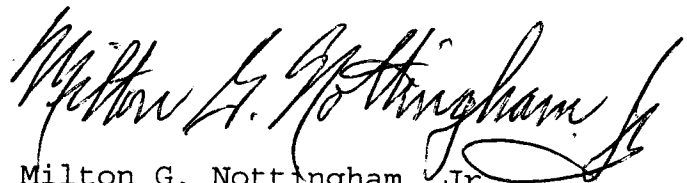
2 August 1999

Ms. Vontell D. Tucker
Public Affairs Specialist
Maritime Administration
400 Seventh Street, S.W.
Washington, D. C. 20590

Dear Ms. Tucker;

Pursuant the announcement in The Propeller Club Quarterly of MARAD's interest in the service of American Merchant Mariners in the Korean War, I am pleased to provide you with the attached narrative and supporting data. If you have any questions or feel that I can be of assistance in providing further information on the role of American Merchant Mariners, ashore and afloat, during the Korean Hostilities, please call upon me.

Sincerely,



Milton G. Nottingham, Jr.
Chairman of the Board

Enclosures

U. S. MERCHANT MARINERS IN THE KOREAN WAR

In the period preceeding the outbreak of hostilities in the Republic of Korea, the U. S. Government maintained a mission in that country to assist in the training of the South Koreans in critical military and civilian skills. This group of U. S. personnel was known as the American Mission in Korea or AMIK. The AMIK transportation staff included highway, rail and marine personnel. In June of 1950, I was appointed to the Foreign Service as a staff officer with the Economic Cooperation Administration and proceeded to Seoul, assigned to the Marine Branch of AMIK.

The AMIK Marine Branch was headed by Captain Oliver H. Ritchie, USNR (later Rear Admiral, USNR) and included several U.S. Merchant Mariners who were responsible for training managerial personnel in the Republic of Korea (ROK) shipping companies and for training Korean port personnel. Captain Thomas A. King was the Port Superintendent of Inchon, and the writer was the Port Superintendent of Pusan, in June of 1950 when the North Korean Army invaded the Republic of Korea.

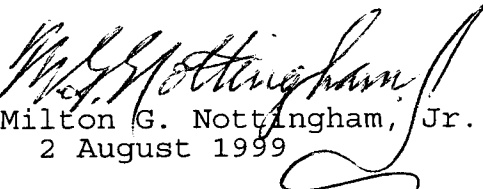
The area around Seoul, including Inchon, was very near the 38th Parallel and the ROK forces were unable to defend that region against the overwhelming forces of the North. Therefore, the dependents of the America Embassy and AMIK personnel were promptly evacuated by ship from Inchon to Japan and were later followed by the Embassy and AMIK staff members including Captain King. (Captain King was later to become Atlantic Region Director of the Maritime Administration and finally a Rear Admiral in the U. S. Maritime Service and the Superintendent of the U. S. Merchant Marine Academy.)

In Pusan, the American Consulate was instructed to evacuate all U. S. personnel in the area by sea. With the Consul's authority, I ordered the two American ships in the port of Pusan at that time to take on board the American evacuees. One ship was a States Marine Line vessel and the second was a Lykes Bros. Steamship Company ship. A second Lykes Line ship subsequently entered port and also took on evacuees, as did a Greek flag Liberty ship that was in port when the evacuation commenced. During the evacuation, which included U. S. military personnel, President Harry S. Truman announced that the United States and the United Nations were responding to the crisis and would send troops to support the Republic of Korea forces. Accordingly, the few U. S. military personnel on board the evacuation ships were ordered to disembark and await the arrival of U. S. military forces from Japan.

The senior military officer in the AMIK group in Pusan at that time was a Lieutenant Colonel. He immediately established a Command Post in the American Consulate building in Pusan. In the small U.S. Army cadre in Pusan at that time, there were no port personnel. Accordingly, Captain Alfred T. Meschter, who was a member of the Marine Branch of AMIK and also assigned to Pusan, and I volunteered to remain with the troops and operate the port. Lieut. Colonel R. S. Emmerich, USA, Commander of the Provisional Korean Military Advisory Group, immediately accepted our offer of assistance and on 28 June 1950, issued Provisional Order Number One (copy attached) naming his staff and designating the writer Port Commander of Pusan and Captain Meschter, Assistant Port Commander.

Colonel Arthur G. Syran, USAR, Director of the Transportation Division of ECA, recommended on two occasions that Messers Meschter, Willis and Nottingham, of the Marine Branch, and Jeddiah Weeks, of the Rail Branch of AMIK, each be awarded the Medal of Freedom for their service in Korea. (A copy of Colonel Syran's Memo on this subject is attached.)

Although not known to the American public, the American Merchant Mariners that trained the Koreans in port and ship operations played an important role in the war effort, reflected credit on their training, and made a lasting contribution to the subsequent economic development of the Republic of Korea. (King, Meschter and Nottingham are Kings Pointers.)


Milton G. Nottingham, Jr.
2 August 1999

Attachments: Copy of U.S. Army Provisional Korean Military Advisory Group Order No. 1
Copy of ltr. of commendation from ROK Minister of Trans.
Copy of recommendation for award of Medal of Freedom
Copy of USN Special Fitness Report with recommendation for "spot" promotion.
Copy of ltr. from Wm. c. Foster, Administrator of ECA dated 10/11/50.
Copy of Letter dated April 22, 1952, from Col. Arthur G. Syran, Director of the Transportation Division ECA\MSA

C O P Y

HEADQUARTERS
PROVISIONAL KOREAN MILITARY ADVISORY GROUP
PUSAN, KOREA

SPECIAL ORDER)
NO. 1)

28th June 1950

1. The following assignments are announced effective
this date.

Commanding Officer	R. S. Emmerich	Lt. Col
Executive Officer	K. Guillory	Major
S-1	G. Wells	Captain
S-2	C. Putman	Captain
S-3	J. Morlay	Captain
S-4	H. Slater	Captain
Transportation Off	C. Finch	Major
Provost	W. Glass	Captain
Port Commander	M. Nottingham	Civ.
Port Asst.	A. Meschter	Civ.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER:

ROLLENS S. EMERICH
Lt. Col. Inf.
Commanding Officer

ECONOMIC COOPERATION ADMINISTRATION

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

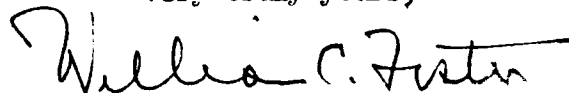
OCT 11 1950

Mr. Milton G. Nottingham, Jr.
Deputy Port Superintendent, Pusan
Economic Cooperation Administration
Mission to Korea
Tokyo, Japan

My dear Mr. Nottingham:

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I transmit to you my personal commendation for the outstanding service you have rendered the Economic Cooperation Administration and the Republic of Korea. From the outset of the conflict in Korea you voluntarily remained at Pusan and in conjunction with Mr. Meschter displayed extraordinary initiative in assuming command of port operations at a time that the port operations at Pusan were vital to the very existence of the United Nations' Forces. By working twelve hours or more a day, and alternating on duty with Mr. Meschter, the two of you were able to perform constant supervision of that essential facility. You assumed these added responsibilities and successfully performed your duties under extremely adverse and trying conditions. You have reflected great credit to yourself, to the Economic Cooperation Administration, and to your country. Your conduct deserves the highest praise.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "William C. Foster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "W" and a long, sweeping underline.

Administrator

REPUBLIC OF KOREA
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION
Pusan, Korea

March 20, 1951

Mr. Milton G. Nottingham, Jr.
Chief, Marine Transportation Branch
Economic Cooperation Administration
Mission to Korea

The Minister of Transportation on behalf of the Republic of Korea wishes to express appreciation for your effective assistance to the merchant marine of our country.

Your efforts have been reflected in many of the improvements of our merchant marine and by the guidance given the marine officials by you and your associates with the Economic Cooperation Administration a pattern has been set for on even greater contribution than is now apparent.

Due to your widespread activities in all phases of the marine field it is impossible to enumerate all of your accomplishments. One of the greatest was the inculcation of a spirit of progress and cooperation in the officials of the various maritime agencies and the establishment of an effective training system for merchant marine personnel ashore and afloat.

Another outstanding accomplishment was the effective leadership you demonstrated and the valuable assistance you gave the armed forces of the United Nations in the port of Pusan during the initial period of hostilities in the summer of 1950. By virtue of your efforts large numbers of troops and supplies for the United Nations forces were handled in an expeditious manner.

S. K. Kim
Kim, Suk Kwan
Minister

COPY

DEPUTY COMMANDER NAVAL FORCES FAR EAST
A.P.O. 59
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

DNHFF/BJL/r Jg
P20-1/00
Serial: P19
26 August 1951

From: Deputy Commander Naval Forces Far East, Pusan Korea.
Commander Fleet Activities, Korea

To: The Chief of Naval Personnel

Via: Commander Naval Forces Far East

Subj: Special Report on Ensign Milton G. Nottingham, Jr. DML, USNR
(inactive) 182371 during period 25 June 1950 to 27 August 1950.

1. Lacking suitable fitness report forms, this letter report is substituted.
2. At the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, Ensign Milton G. Nottingham, Jr. DML, USNR 182371 was employed as Deputy Port Superintendent at Port of Pusan, Korea with additional duties as Advisor to the Marine Bureau, Ministry of Transportation Republic of Korea under the E.C.A. Program in a civilian status.
3. On 25 June 1950 Ensign Nottingham worked in close coordination with the U. S. Army evacuation officer at Pusan, Korea and aided materially in the efficient and expeditious evacuation of United States civilians to Japan. He volunteered his services and remained at Pusan in the capacity of Port Commander. During the period of about ten days until arrival of first echelon U. S. Army Port personnel he directed all operations of the Port of Pusan in close cooperation with the lone US Naval Liaison Officer, Lieut (jg) George W. Hurley, U. S. Navy. These operations comprised assignment berths and cranes; supervision stevedore operations; initiation of repairs to roads and piers; and accumulation port statistics and data. During this ten days period 55 ships carrying approximately 15000 troops, 1600 vehicles, and 3000 tons military cargo were handled. Upon arrival advance elements 8057th Transportation Port Company Provisional, he carried out the same functions.
4. From the period 10 July 1950 to 27 August 1950, Ensign Nottingham has been under my personal and close observation. I find him to be an outstanding young Naval officer of excellent personal and military character, capable, dependable, calm, mature in judgement, and exceptionally well skilled in the arts of the mariner. He has contributed immeasurably to the initial successful operation of the Port of Pusan during a critical period of great confusion. I recommend him for promotion to the rank of Lieutenant, DM, USNR. I would particularly desire him on my ship in time of war. Until the recent arrival of many new and high ranking port officials, the source of all information and the usual reply was, "See Mr. Nottingham". He was in a position of great responsibility at a critical period, and he did an outstanding job.

Copy to: Ensign Nottingham
File

M. J. Luosey

Robert L. Rupard

January 3, 1952

Arthur G. Syran

Recommendations Awards of Medal of Freedom - Korea Mission Personnel

This is in response to your memorandum of November 7, same subject as above.

At my request, Mr. Nottingham prepared resumes of the meritorious activities of Alfred T. Meschter, Albert C. Willis and Jedediah Weeks.

With respect to Milton G. Nottingham, I attach hereto copies of two communications, one addressed to him and signed by the Korean Minister of Transportation, dated March 20, 1951, and a letter, dated August 26, 1950, from the Deputy Commander, U. S. Naval Forces Far East to the Chief of Naval Personnel.

These papers are submitted to supplement my prior communications wherein recommendation was made that all four, namely, Meschter, Willis, Weeks and Nottingham, be awarded the Medal of Freedom. No one, of course, has disputed that all four of these men rendered meritorious service during their period of duty in Korea. The only question seems to be whether they did that "something extra" which entitles them to the award of the Medal of Freedom. An examination of the criteria used to award the medal to Mr. Joseph E. Moore appears to indicate that the other four men performed meritorious service of equal weight and, hence, are entitled to the recognition.

With respect to Albert C. Willis, granting all of his shortcomings, including unsatisfactory service, this does not in any way detract from his performance over and above the call of duty where courage and valor are demonstrated. I think there is a marked difference between skill, proficiency and courage and valor. Many times a private or an apprentice seaman has displayed heroism which entitled him to an award of the Congressional Medal of Honor, yet that same individual might lack the intelligence, skill and efficiency of a corporal or petty officer.

The attached papers seem to indicate that both Meschter and Willis not only suffered while imprisoned but passed on valuable information to the military authorities after their release. Weeks was the only American railroad man in Korea between the period of withdrawal and evacuation and the landing of American forces. Instead of seeking safety as others had, he risked his life beyond the call of duty to fulfill what he considered his moral responsibility to resist aggression.

With respect to Nottingham, I believe that paragraph 3 of the letter of the Deputy Commander, U. S. Naval Forces Far East, dated August 26, 1950, requires special consideration. He remained at Pusan and acted as "Port Commander" for a period of ten days when there was no one else, and received the first contingent of U. S. Army port personnel. It takes more than ordinary men to remain in danger zones while their comrades, with a perfect right and with full authority, are sent to safety.

History records the apprehension and anxiety of the American public as to the fate of American citizens and soldiers in Korea. The possibility of a Dunkirk

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

disaster blackened the skies over American homes and the men who stood on the beach at Pusan knew what would happen to them if we were pushed into the sea. The American courage and fortitude in the face of what appeared insurmountable obstacles prevailed. Courage beyond the call of duty, disregard for one's personal safety for the preservation of American ideals and refusal to be licked have written more glorious pages in the history of American democracy.

It is easy to forget the dangers of yesterday but deeds of valor and courage such as displayed by Weeks and Nottingham during the evacuation in the cause of freedom and at the risk of their own lives should not go unrewarded but merit the Medal of Freedom. In the case of both Weeks and Nottingham not only did they display courage but they also put their experience and skill to the accomplishment of tangible deeds in furtherance of the successful military efforts during a period of great confusion. If these men go unrewarded, what price glory? Failure to reward is tantamount to saying that those who stayed to give that "extra" service to their country and risked their lives in the cause of freedom did no more than those who, by command, were evacuated.

I urge that the matter be reviewed again and I recommend that all four, Alfred T. Meschter, Jedediah Weeks, Milton G. Nottingham and even Albert C. Willis, be recommended to the Defense Department and be awarded the Medal of Freedom with proper citation of their deeds.

Attachments

Syran/mwh

AGS
HPW
ORF
CF

File - Trans. Personnel

De Tamm

MUTUAL SECURITY AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



April 22, 1952

Mr. Milton G. Nottingham
Deputy Chief, Cargo Branch
Transportation Division
Mutual Security Agency
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Nottingham:

In August 1950, your outstanding achievements in Pusan, Korea came to my attention. I was impressed by the fact that a young man of 30 years had the knowledge and experience to be named Port Commander of the port of Pusan on the 26th of June, 1950, and had the capacity to accomplish the mission of receiving the first U. S. troops on the mainland of Korea at a most critical period. Later, I discovered that you were a Kings Point alumnus, held a license of Master Mariner to captain vessels in any ocean, that you also held a commission in the U.S.N.R., and that you had acquitted yourself with distinction in Korea. As a result, I requested your transfer to the headquarters of the Economic Cooperation Administration in Washington, D. C.

It is not my purpose to relate in detail the services that you have rendered to our Government ever and beyond the call of duty in a time of great emergency. Suffice to say that you, as a civilian employee of the Economic Cooperation Administration in Korea, holding the post of Port Superintendent, Pusan, voluntarily refused to be evacuated after the outbreak of hostilities, remained, assumed greater responsibilities and duties without regard to your personal safety, and directed the landing of the first U. S. troops in Pusan. It took courage for you and three others of the ECA Korean Staff to remain as volunteers. Notwithstanding the many commendations you received, I felt that you were entitled to the highest recognition that could be given, and, hence, I applied through normal channels and recommended that you be awarded the Medal of Freedom.

The record shows that two such medals were awarded, but recommendations for those awards were made almost immediately after the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. The individuals named for these awards were evacuated while you and three others remained. I felt that in addition to yourself, three others should have been awarded the Medal: Messrs. Nechter and Willis, who were on the ill-fated "Kimball R. Smith" on which the Communist-sympathizing Korean crew mutinied, and Mr. Weeks, who supervised the rail transportation of the U. S. Armed Forces in Korea in the advance combat areas.